

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BAR - BENCH - MEDIA CONFERENCE

A meeting of the Bar-Bench-Media Conference was held on Wednesday, June 14, 1995 at 1:00 p.m. in the Family Court Conference Room in the Family Court Building in Dover. The meeting was open to the public. Notice of the meeting had been posted. The members of the Conference in attendance were:

Members from the Print News Media

Members from the Electronic News Media

Marilyn Buerkle
Allen Loudell
William Osborne

Members from the Bench

Justice Randy J. Holland
Judge Jay Paul James
Judge Roderick R. McKelvie
President Judge Henry duPont Ridgely

Members from the Bar

Howard M. Handelman, Esquire
Rosemary K. Killian, Esquire
Harvey B. Rubenstein, Esquire

Harvey Rubenstein called the meeting to order. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved. Mr. Michael Pelrine, Delaware State News Editor, attended on behalf of Tammy Brittingham who was unable to attend the meeting.

The first agenda item was the election of new officers. Tammy Brittingham was elected chair, Judge McKelvie was elected vice chair, and Rosemary Killian was elected secretary. In Tammy's absence, Harvey continued to chair the meeting.

The second agenda item was a report from the FOIA Committee. Bill Osborne reported that he had spoken with Attorney General Brady, Gretchen Bender and John Sweeney concerning a FOIA seminar; however, the committee had not been able to meet and do any planning. Bill said that he would contact Gretchen and try to get the seminar planning off the ground. Bill did note that the Attorney General reiterated that she thought the location for the FOIA seminar should be Dover or a site in lower Delaware.

The next agenda item was a report from the Education Committee. Bill Osborne reported that two mini-programs were scheduled for June 20, 1995 with Chief Judge Poppiti in Wilmington and Dover. At 9:00 a.m. at the News Journal Building, Chief Judge Poppiti will meet with media staff and other interested parties to discuss the Family Court. The program will be repeated at 2:00 p.m. in Dover in the New Castle Room. The Education Committee will review the program with the Conference at the September meeting.

Justice Holland was asked the status of the Conference's request to the

Supreme Court to expand electronic news media coverage to the trial courts. Justice Holland informed the Conference that the Court had discussed the matter at two administrative conferences. He said the Court would like another demonstration with only the equipment that will be in the courtroom present, the equipment to be placed in the exact locations where it will be placed during a trial, the use of still cameras that make less sound than the one used in the first demonstration, and operators who are dressed appropriately to ensure that their presence is unobtrusive.

Justice Holland stated the Court is anxious to move forward in addressing this issue but needs the electronic news media's best effort in the next demonstration. Furthermore, the Court is not waiting for the courtroom of the future to be built in order to expand electronic news media coverage of trial court proceedings. The Court is interested in how the electronic media would cover trials in the existing courtrooms. The courtrooms of the future will be wired to meet the electronic needs of the parties and will therefore have the capability of accommodating electronic news media coverage of trial court proceedings.

As the coverage of the O.J. Simpson trial has continued, Justice Holland indicated that gavel to gavel coverage was good because the entire proceeding was available for the viewing public. However, the coverage also highlighted concerns

for jurors and witnesses. Justice Holland also spoke about the educational value for the public of expanded electronic news media coverage of trial court proceedings. He questioned the educational value of having cameras in the courtroom if the only purpose was to provide a brief sound bite on a news program. At a recent meeting that he attended in Washington, a Judge from New Zealand said that, in his country, the television media must show at least a two minute portion of a trial that they choose to cover and provide the judge with a copy of the tape for review. Justice Holland said that he was not suggesting that this be the practice in Delaware but was merely citing it as an example.

Bill Osborne said that he would talk to other electronic news media representatives and plan a second demonstration that would address the Court's concerns. He will contact Steve Taylor to make the necessary arrangements.

Harvey reminded the conference that Tammy would like suggestions for the agenda for the next year as well as any special projects that the Conference could undertake. Suggestions can be sent to Tammy or Steve Taylor.

The next meeting of the Conference is scheduled for Wednesday, September 13, 1995 at 1:00 p.m. in the Supreme Court Conference Room in Wilmington. The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Date: June 28, 1995

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stephen D. Taylor". The signature is written in black ink with some light blue or green highlights on the strokes.